

CROW INDIAN TRIBE



Resources Report

LAND AND
USE REALTY

LAND USE AND REALTY

Introduction

The Crow Reservation's exterior eastern boundary is adjacent to the Northern Cheyenne Reservation. The reservation is approximately 60 miles wide and 40 miles in length, encompassing approximately 2.3 million acres within the exterior boundaries.

Mountains, residual uplands, and alluvial bottoms form the topography of the Crow Reservation. The three principle mountain ranges are the Wolf Mountains to the east and the Big Horn and Pryor Mountains to the southwest. Rolling upward plains slope downward to the north and east from the mountains. The plains constitute the bulk of the reservation and vary in altitude from 3,000 to 4,500 feet. The alluvial bottomlands are located along the Bighorn River, Little Bighorn River, and Pryor Creek drainage systems.

Land Status

Surface and Minerals Ownership

The Crow Indian Reservation contains 2,296,000 acres in parts of Bighorn and Yellowstone counties (Statewide Draft Oil and Gas EIS, p. 3-37). Ownership of surface acres includes the Crow Tribe (455,719, 20%), individually allotted trust (1,035,850, 45%), and private fee acreage (804,431, 35%). The pattern of surface ownership generally is "checkerboard" with interspersed tribal, trust and fee lands. The Tribe does have consolidated blocks of surface ownership in areas of the Bighorn and Pryor mountains. *Figure 5* shows surface ownership and *Figure 6* shows mineral ownership.

The reservation contains 2,034,746 acres in subsurface mineral rights (Statewide Draft Oil and Gas EIS, p. 3-37). Ownership of mineral acres includes the Crow Tribe (405,888, 20%), individually allotted trust (824,427, 41%), and private fee acreage (804,431, 39%). *Figure 7* is a consolidated surface and mineral ownership map.

Land Use

Land use on the Crow Indian Reservation is typical of rural areas in Montana. Land uses include rangeland for livestock grazing, irrigated and dryland crop production, forestland, and developed areas for communities and natural resources production. Of the approximately 1.5 million surface acres in tribal and individual allotted trust ownership, approximately 68% are grazing rangeland, 12% are dry cropland, 3% are irrigated cropland, 15% are forestland, and 1% are wildland, and 1% are developed areas (Crow 1997). Most agricultural land on the reservation is leased to non-Indian interests; in 1996, leases included approximately 1.2 million acres of grazing lands, 150,000 acres of dryland farmland, and 30,000 acres of irrigated farmland (EDA 1996). *Figure 8* shows land use and vegetation, and *Figure 9* shows natural grazing districts.

In the 2000 Census, the reservation's population density was 1.19 persons per square mile, compared with densities of 2.5 and 6.0 persons per square mile for Big Horn County and Montana, respectively (Census 2000).

The Statewide Draft Oil and Gas EIS identifies the eastern end of the Crow Indian Reservation as an area with potential for producing coal bed methane (CBM).

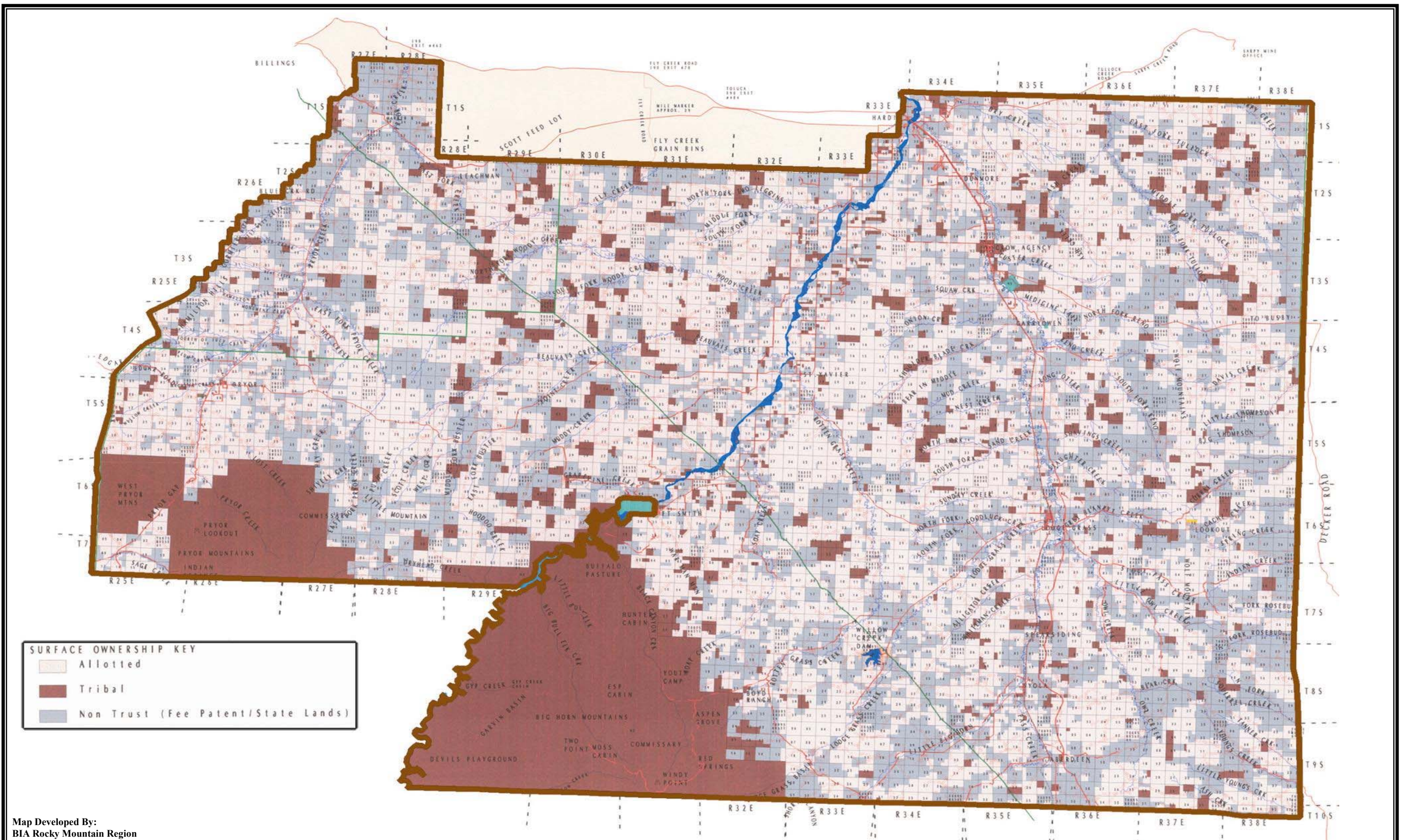


Figure 5
Reservation Surface Ownership



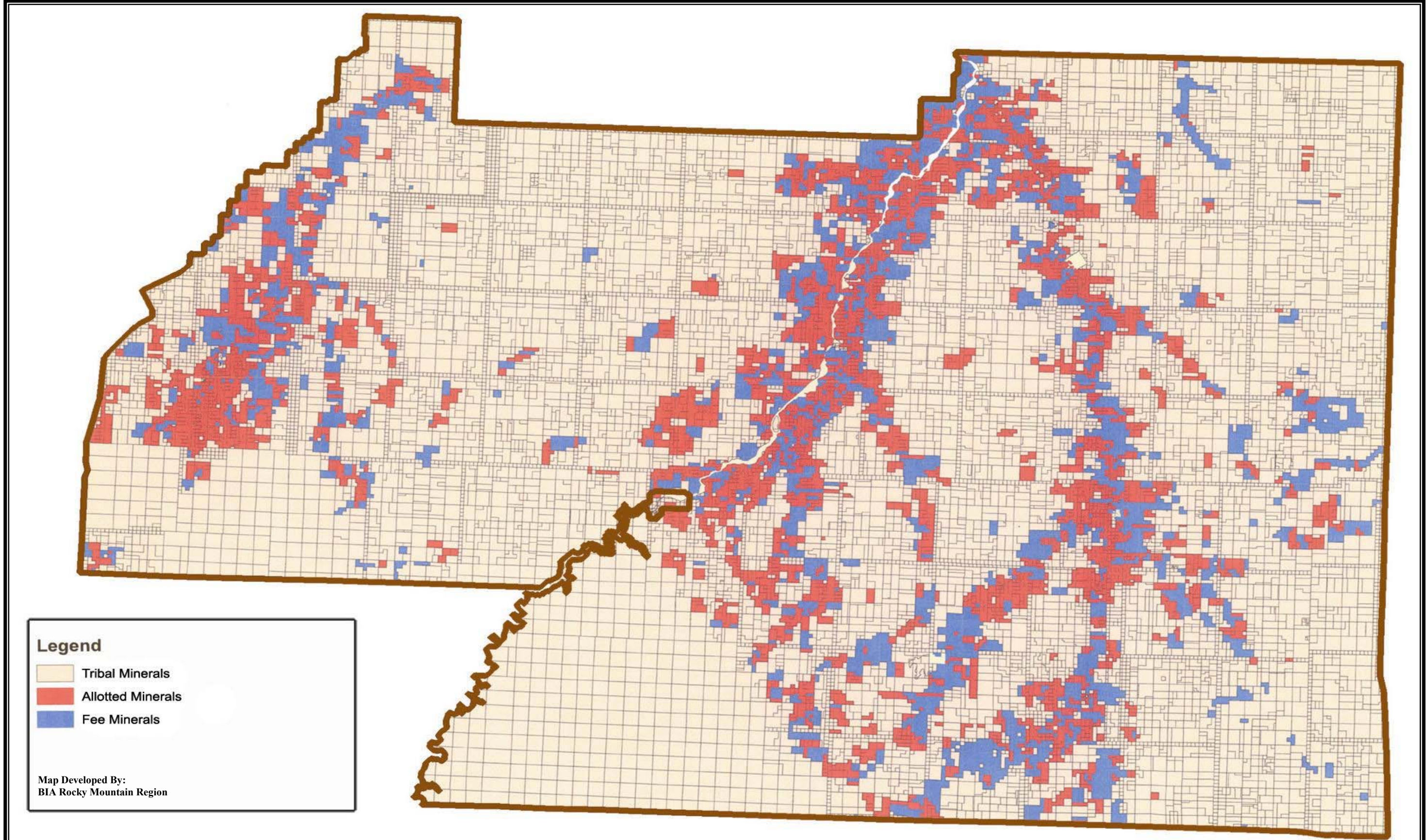


Figure 6
Reservation Mineral Ownership

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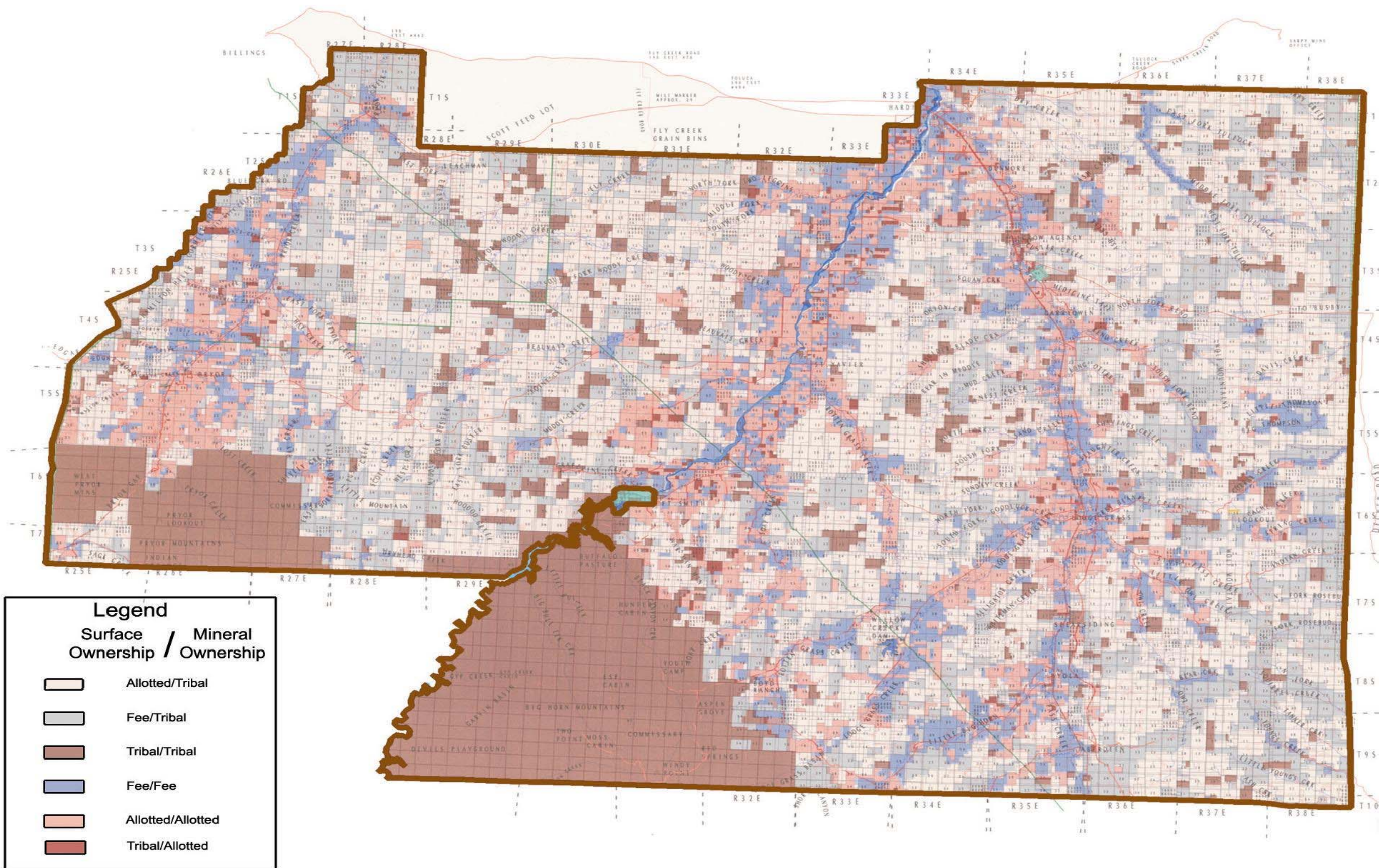


Figure 7
Consolidated Surface & Mineral Ownership

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LAND USE CROW INDIAN RESERVATION

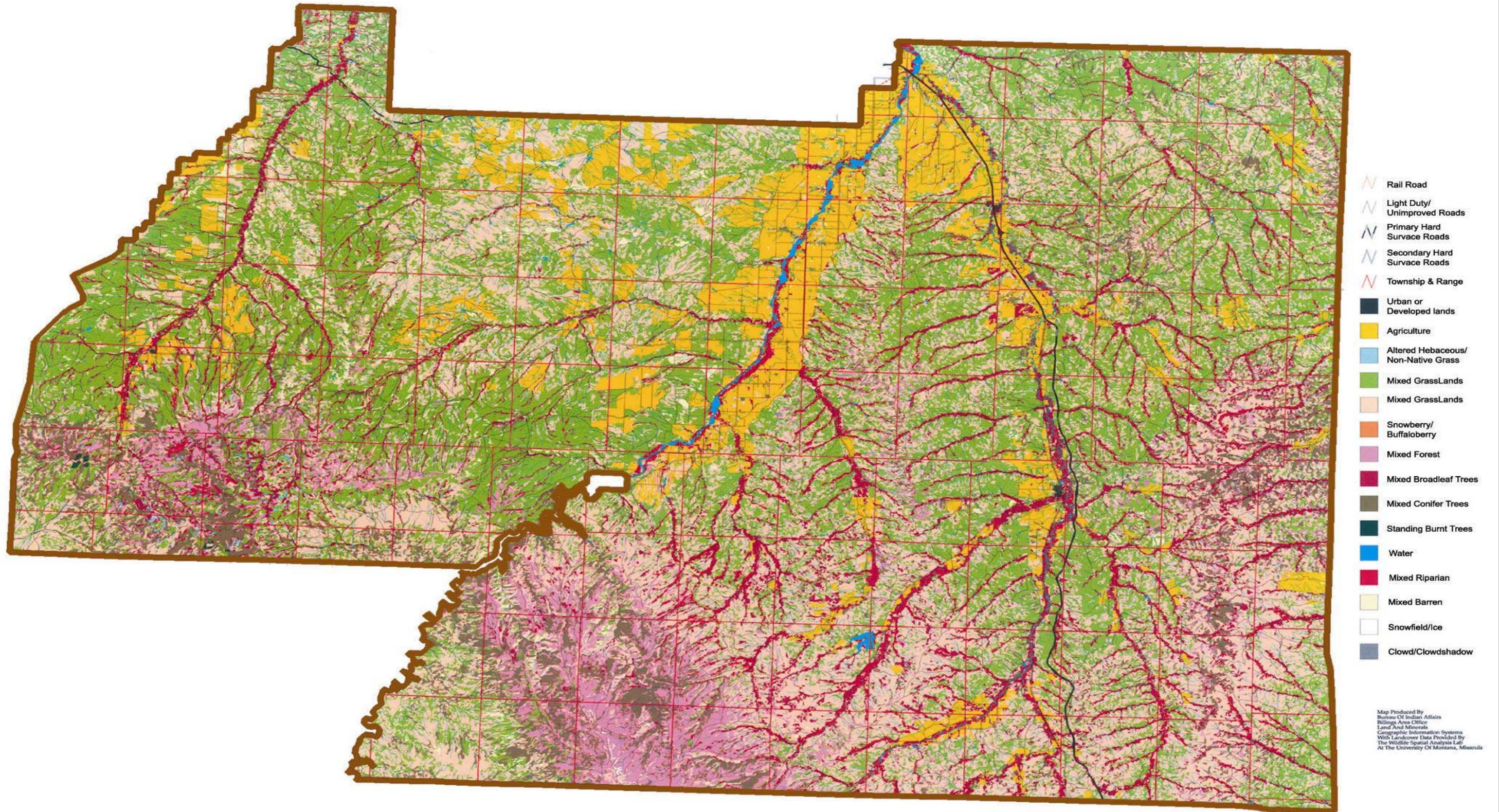


Figure 8
Land Use and Vegetation



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This Crow CBM production area is 12 to 15 miles wide and extends from the northern border of the reservation to the reservation's border with Wyoming (Statewide Draft Oil and Gas EIS, p. 3-39 and p. 4-3, Map 4-1). Land use in this area includes timber harvest by the Crow Tribe in the Wolf Mountains, livestock grazing, and dryland production of alfalfa and small grains. *Figure 10* shows reservation development opportunities identified by the Crow Tribe in 1977 (Crow 1977).

DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES ON THE CROW INDIAN RESERVATION

Base Map Developed By:
RMR for Crow Tribe Resource
Development and Land Use Plans

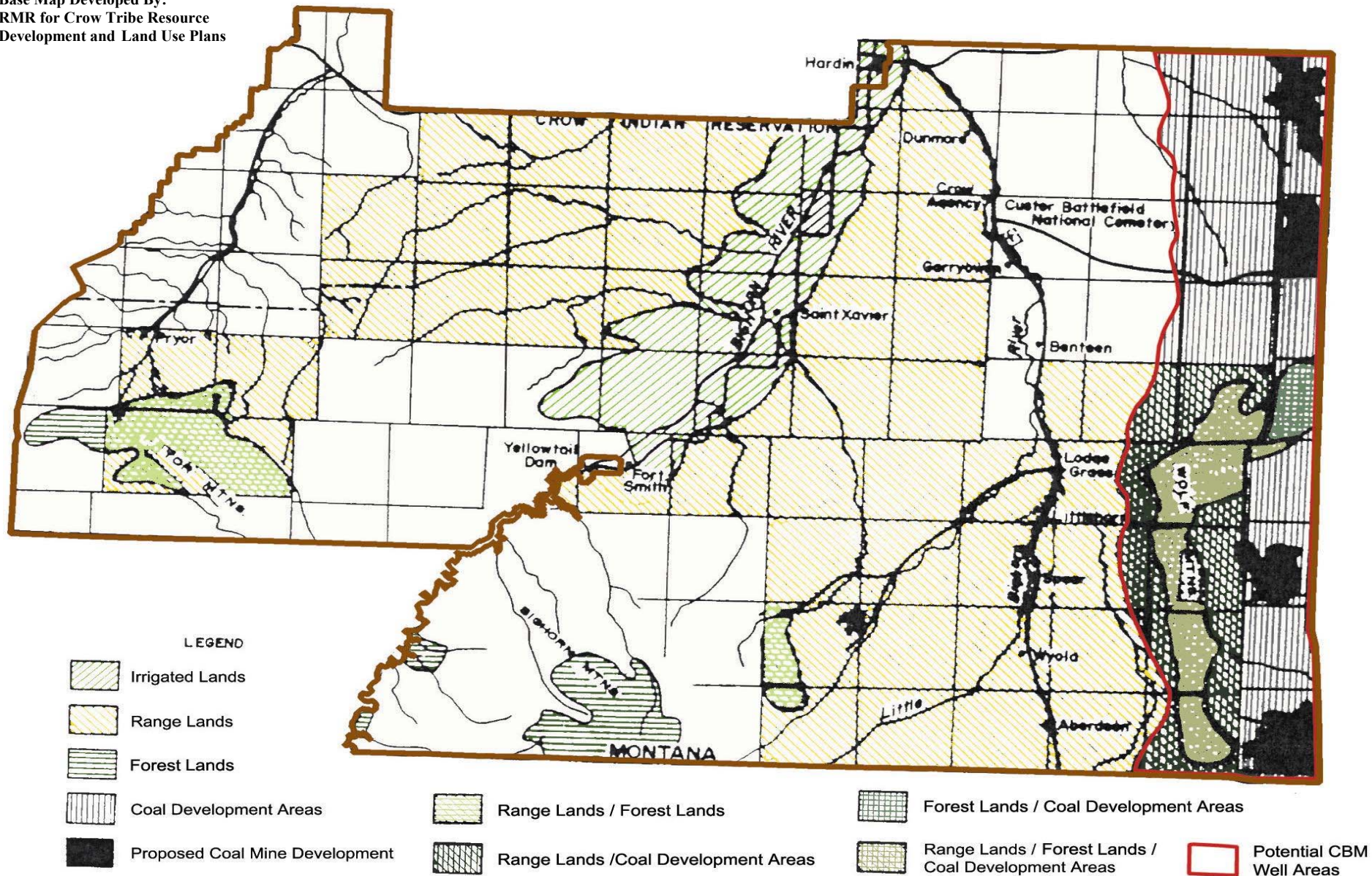


Figure 10
Reservation Development Opportunities

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